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REPORT ON THE FINANCING AND PARTICIPATION OF EXPERTS IN UNCTAD EXPERT MEETINGS IN ACHIEVING THE OBJECTIVE OF THE FINANCING: TO IMPROVE THE PARTICIPATION OF DEVELOPING COUNTRY EXPERTS IN UNCTAD MEETINGS

Introduction

I. Accomplishments and expenditure report of the $1,088,000 of the "savings" devoted to financing participation of developing country experts in UNCTAD expert meetings

II. Conclusions

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Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to paragraph 3 of decision 456 (XLV) of 23 October 1998, in which the Trade and Development Board requested the UNCTAD Secretary-General to present a report to the Board on the financing and participation of experts in UNCTAD expert meetings in achieving the objectives of the financing. It also contains information on the trust fund for enhancing the participation of developing country experts in UNCTAD meetings.

2. The main objective of the financing consisted of enhancing the deliberations of expert meetings by increasing the participation of developing country experts.

I. Accomplishments and expenditure report of $1,088,000 allocated for financing the participation of developing country experts in UNCTAD expert meetings

3. In partial implementation of paragraph 114 of "A Partnership for Growth and Development" and in the context of the report of the Secretary-General contained in document A/52/898, an amount of $1,088,000 was allocated to enhance the expertise of the deliberations of the expert meetings, inviting Governments of developing countries to nominate experts to participate in those meetings in their personal capacity. Guidelines and modalities for the utilization of the funds were established and approved by the Trade and Development Board on 23 October 1998 (decision 456(XLV)).

4. The nomination procedure was as follows:

(i) The Secretary-General included, in each notification to member States for forthcoming expert meetings, a specific request for nominees to benefit from the financing;

(ii) At least four weeks before each meeting, member States were invited to name one expert per each expert meeting to benefit from the financing, attaching a CV.

5. The Secretary-General of UNCTAD based his decisions regarding the enhancement of the participation of developing country experts on the principle of equitable geographical representation, beneficiary needs and the expertise of the experts concerned. Internal organizational arrangements were set up to ensure full implementation of the guidelines. In order to stretch available resources to cover as many experts as possible, travel was authorized on the basis of least costly fares.

6. The above provisions were applied to the seven expert group meetings held in 1999 (see list in Table 1). A total of 146 experts with proven relevant experience were financed through these arrangements. They were nominated by their Governments and served in their personal capacity. Total expenditures amounted to $511,300. The average total cost incurred per expert was $3,502 for a meeting lasting three days (see Table 1 and Graph 1).

7. In order to ensure equitable geographical representation, UNCTAD adopted as guidelines the practice established for geographical representation among developing countries according to Economic and Social Council resolution 1992/222. It was understood that geographical balance would be met on an overall basis and would not necessarily be strictly applied to each expert meeting. Interest in subject matters taken up in the meetings may vary in accordance with the development interests and needs of each region or member State.

8. On that basis, the actual percentage distribution of experts, by region, compared to the target, was the following:

	Target	Actual
Member States from Africa	40%	41.1%
Member States from Asia and Pacific	30%	27.4%
Members States from Latin America/Caribbean	30%	31.5%

There is a very slight over-representation of experts coming from Latin American member States, and a slight under-representation of experts from Asian member States. However, the distribution seems close enough to the target to have ensured equitable distribution (Table 2 and Graph 2).

9. Some member States responded more than others to the request to nominate experts to participate in the expert meetings. In fact, from the analysis of the number of countries covered in each geographical region, the 60 experts from Africa came from 30 different countries, the 40 experts from Asia from 16 countries and the 46 experts from Latin America, from 21 countries (Table 3).

10. There were in total 45 experts (or 31 per cent of the total number of experts) from 21 least developed countries (LDCs). Of these, 37 experts came from 18 LDCs in Africa (or 55 per cent of all LDC experts) and eight experts from three LDCs in Asia and the Pacific.

11. Finally, with regard to the gender dimension, it is interesting to note that 18.5 per cent of the experts financed from capitals were women. The highest proportion of women was for the Expert Meeting on Capacity-Building in the Area of Electronic Commerce, where they represented 35 per cent of the total of 26 experts financed. The gender distribution of experts in the seven expert meetings is attached as Table 4.

12. All regions nominated women experts. Latin America/Caribbean nominated 12 women experts out of 46 (26 per cent), with almost half of those countries from the region which participated in the meetings nominating at least one woman. Africa nominated nine women experts out of 60 (15 per cent), the same ratio as for Asia/Pacific (six experts out of 40 nominations). Twenty-five per cent of the countries from the two latter regions nominated woman experts. Details are contained in Table 5.

Impact on expert meeting deliberations

13. In accordance with standard practice, the secretariat conducted its internal assessment of the outcome of each of the seven expert meetings. In addition to reviewing the substantive outcome, the assessments considered the impact of greater expert participation from developing countries obtained through the financing arrangements.

14. There is a unanimous view in the secretariat that the contributions of the experts from developing countries were of a very high order: the experts brought to the meetings direct and relevant experiences of national development in the areas under consideration. Their contributions enabled the meetings to focus discussions on specific issues of interest to developing countries.

15. The discussions in the meetings, and the outcomes thereof, were regarded as relevant, practical and action-oriented. The outcomes of the meetings resulted in high=quality and pragmatic "agreed conclusions and/or recommendations", addressed to individual Governments, the international community and the UNCTAD secretariat. For example, the meetings facilitated progress in consensus-building in such fields as international investment. It was recognized that these meetings went "directly to the heart of a wide range of trade issues with a development focus" (excerpts from UNCTAD internal assessment reports addressed to the Secretary-General). In particular, the meetings resulted in:

- Exchanges of national experiences and views from different stakeholders touching on the subject matters being discussed, of great value to advancing the understanding of issues at the technical level;
- Identification of substantive topics for further work; and
- Consensus-building as regards treatment of international measures to further support development.

16. Participation by developing countries in the expert meetings was very high, both of experts financed by their own Governments and of those financed by UNCTAD. In fact, out of a total of 479 experts from capitals who attended the 1999 expert meetings, 351 were from developing countries (73 per cent). Of those, 146 were financed by UNCTAD (42 per cent) and 76 came from LDCs (22 per cent). In the Expert Meeting on the Impact of Changing Supply-and-Demand Market Structures, for example, there were 59 experts from capitals, 49 of them from developing countries (83 per cent of all experts from capitals) and 29 financed from the "savings". In the case of the Expert Meeting on Capacity-Building in the Area of Electronic Commerce, of 91 experts from the capitals, 73 were from developing countries, 26 of them financed under the "savings".

17. If the number of experts from capitals registered to attend the expert meetings in 1999 is compared with 1998, it is all the more evident that there has been an important increase in participation of developing country experts from capitals (Table 6b). In 1998 a total of 308 experts from capitals attended the eight expert meetings (as opposed to 351 experts in 1999, attending seven meetings), of whom 201, or 65 per cent, were from developing countries (vs. 479, or 73 per cent, in 1999), and 41, or 20 per cent, from LDCs (vs. 76, or 22 per cent, in 1999).

18. In general, requests for financing experts exceeded available supply, and some Permanent Missions expressed concern that their proposals were not retained. For example, in the case of the Expert Meeting on Services for SME Development, there were 12 countries that could not be selected for financing, while in the case of the Expert Meeting on International Investment Agreements, only one was not retained. However, there has been a great effort to ensure as broad a geographical representation as possible for each expert meeting.

Impact on the secretariat

19. The requests presenting nominees often arrived shortly before the expert meeting in question. As a result, tremendous effort was required from staff in the Divisions, Intergovernmental Support Service and Resources Management Service to ensure processing in good time. Receiving the CVs of the candidates presented by member States one week before the meeting simply does not allow enough time to complete all administrative procedures: to get internal clearance, inform the experts, prepare and process the travel requests, release the tickets, prepare the rosters, arrange the follow-up changes in original requests, and communicate with diplomatic Missions in Geneva and the experts regarding ticket reservations and hotels. The short time frame did not always allow for adequate evaluation of the CVs and placed a lot of strain on those staff members organizing the meeting. It has also increased the workload of the UNCTAD and UNOG travel units.

20. One conclusion from the exercise is that the deadline for nominating the experts should be established well in advance and be respected. Another is to make explicit the role of the Permanent Missions in acting as the focal point between the secretariat and the candidates: for example in dealing with such matters as CVs without cover letters, letters requesting financing without CVs, or CVs with the candidate's address, telephone or fax number missing.

Overall financial summary

21. Total expenditures on the financing of experts amounted to $511,000, as against the original allocation of $1,088,000.

22. The original allocation was based on an assumption (in May 1998) that there would be 16 expert meetings of three days each over the 18-month period ending December 1999, and that 16 experts would be financed per meeting. It was assumed that the average cost of travel/DSA would amount to $4,250 per expert.

23. In fact, it was only in October 1998 that the Board established the modalities for the financing arrangements. Following General Assembly approval of the "savings" allocation in resolution 53/3 of 12 October 1998, the allotment was received on 23 October 1998. This was too late to apply the financing arrangements for expert meetings convened in the latter part of the year. Thus, instead of 16 meetings, the financial arrangements could be applied only for seven meetings, albeit with an increase in the average number of experts per meeting. However, thanks to the application of strict controls on air travel costs, the average cost of travel/DSA was reduced to $3,502.

24. The Trade and Development Board at its forty-third session in October 1996 requested the UNCTAD Secretary-General to establish a trust fund to enhance the participation of developing country experts in UNCTAD expert meetings. To date, one contribution of $3,000 has been received.

II. Conclusions

25. The positive impact of the increased participation of developing country experts in UNCTAD expert meetings seems confirmed by the experience under the "savings" exercise and exceeded the secretariat's expectations. Not only was there an important increase in the number of developing country experts attending the meetings from capitals, but the quality of the material presented by the experts was greatly appreciated by all participants.

26. The secretariat made the utmost efforts to ensure satisfactory geographical balance. The representation of LDCs could be improved. However, as not all the LDCs have diplomatic Missions in Geneva, this makes it more difficult to ensure complete coverage under present arrangements and within the time frames available.

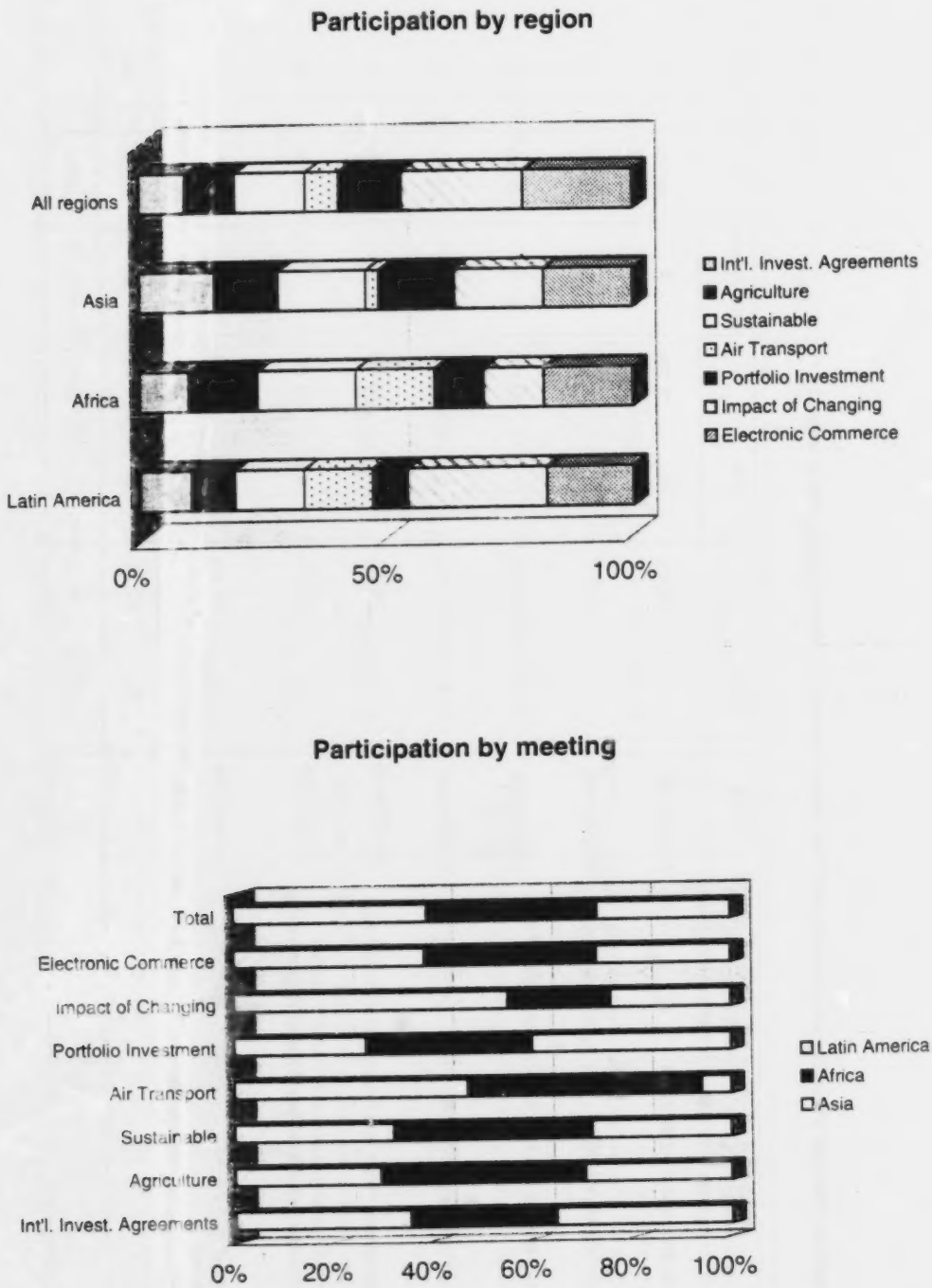
Table 1: Expenditures for experts financed from the 'Savings' allocation and attending UNCTAD expert meetings in 1999 (in US$)

Meeting	Dates	N° experts	Total cost US$	Total cost %	Average cost per expert US$
Expert Meeting on International Investment Agreements	24-26/03/99	17	60,441	11.8%	3,555
Expert Meeting on Trade in the Agricultural Sector	26-28/04/99	17	67,350	13.2%	3,962
Expert Meeting on Sustainable Financial and Non-financial Services for SME Development	02-04/06/99	25	84,649	16.6%	3,386
Expert Meeting on Air Transport Services	21-23/06/99	17	55,634	10.9%	3,273
Expert Meeting on Portfolio Investment Flows and Foreign Direct Investment	28-30/06/99	15	54,386	10.6%	3,626
Expert Meeting on the Impact of Changing Supply-and-Demand Market Structures on Commodity Prices and Exports of Major Interest to Developing Countries	07-09/07/99	29	101,231	19.8%	3,491
Expert Meeting on Capacity-building in the Area of Electronic Commerce: Legal and Regulatory Dimensions	14-16/07/99	26	87,644	17.1%	3,371
TOTAL		146	511,335	100%	3,502

Table 2: Experts financed from the 'Savings' allocation and attending UNCTAD expert meetings in 1999 by geographical region

Meeting	Dates	Africa	%	Asia	%	Latin America	%	Total	%
Expert Meeting on International Investment Agreements	24-26/03/99	5	29.4%	6	35.3%	6	35.3%	17	100%
Expert Meeting on Trade in the Agricultural Sector	26-28/04/99	7	41.2%	5	29.4%	5	29.4%	17	100%
Expert Meeting on Sustainable Financial and Non-financial Services for SME Development	02-04/06/99	10	40.0%	7	28.0%	8	32.0%	25	100%
Expert meeting on Air Transport Services	21-23/06/99	8	47.1%	2	11.8%	7	41.2%	17	100%
Expert Meeting on Portfolio Investment Flows and Foreign Direct Investment	28-30/06/99	4	26.7%	5	33.3%	6	40.0%	15	100%
Expert Meeting on the Impact of Changing Supply-and-Demand Market Structures on Commodity Prices and Exports of Major Interest to Developing Countries	07-09/07/99	16	55.2%	6	20.7%	7	24.1%	29	100%
Expert meeting on Capacity-building in the Area of Electronic Commerce: Legal and Regulatory Dimensions	14-16/07/99	10	38.5%	9	34.6%	7	26.9%	26	100%
TOTAL		60	41.1%	40	27.4%	46	31.5%	146	100%
TARGET DISTRIBUTION			40%		30%		30%		100%

Graph 1: Experts financed from the 'Savings' allocation and attending UNCTAD expert meetings in 1999 by region and by meeting

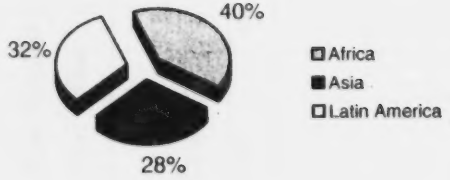


Graph 2: Experts financed from the 'Savings' allocation and attending UNCTAD expert meetings in 1999 by geographical area

Int'l. Invest. Agreements

Agriculture

Sustainable



Air Transport

Table 3: Distribution of experts financed from the 'Savings' allocation per country within geographical region and with special attention to LDCs (1999)

Geographical region	AFRICA		ASIA		LATIN AMERICA	
	1	Algeria	4	LDC Bangladesh	4	Argentina
	1	LDC Angola	1	LDC Bhutan	1	Barbados
	1	LDC Benin	4	China	5	Bolivia
	2	LDC Burkina Faso	3	India	3	Brazil
	4	Cameroon	3	Indonesia	5	Chile
	1	LDC Chad	0	Irak	2	Colombia
	1	LDC Comores	1	Iran	1	Costa Rica
	1	LDC Congo	1	Malaysia	5	Cuba
	1	Côte d'Ivoire	3	LDC Nepal	0	Dominican Republic
	2	Egypt	3	Pakistan	1	El Salvador
	6	LDC Ethiopia	4	Philippines	3	Guatemala
	2	LDC Gambia	2	Singapore	2	Honduras
	3	LDC Guinea	1	Sri Lanka	1	Jamaica
	1	Kenya	4	Thailand	2	Nicaragua
	2	LDC Lesotho	1	Turkmenistan	2	Paraguay
	1	LDC Madagascar	5	Viet Nam	1	Panama
	3	LDC Mali			4	Peru
	3	LDC Mauritania			1	St. Lucia
	2	Mauritius			1	Trinidad & Tobago
	2	Morocco			1	Uruguay
	1	LDC Mozambique			1	Venezuela
	1	LDC Niger				
	1	Nigeria				
	1	Senegal				
	1	South Africa				
	2	LDC Sudan				
	3	LDC Tanzania				
	3	Tunisia				
	3	LDC Uganda				
	4	Zimbabwe				
Total experts:	60	37	40	8	46	0
Total countries:	30	18	16	3	21	0

		Of which LDCs:	
GRAND TOTAL experts:	**146**	**45**	31%
GRAND TOTAL countries:	**67**	**21**	31%

Table 4: Gender distribution of experts financed from the 'Savings' allocation and attending UNCTAD expert meetings in 1999

Meeting	Dates	Women	%	Men	%	N° Experts	%
Expert Meeting on International Investment Agreements	24-26/03/99	1	5.9%	16	94.1%	17	100%
Expert Meeting on Trade in the Agricultural Sector	26-28/04/99	3	17.6%	14	82.4%	17	100%
Expert Meeting on Sustainable Financial and Non-financial Services for SME Development	02-04/06/99	7	28.0%	18	72.0%	25	100%
Expert meeting on Air Transport Services	21-23/06/99	0	0.0%	17	100.0%	17	100%
Expert Meeting on Portfolio Investment Flows and Foreign Direct Investment	28-30/06/99	2	13.3%	13	86.7%	15	100%
Expert Meeting on the Impact of Changing Supply-and-Demand Market Structures on Commodity Prices and Exports of Major Interest to Developing Countries	07-09/07/99	5	17.2%	24	82.8%	29	100%
Expert meeting on Capacity-building in the Area of Electronic Commerce: Legal and Regulatory Dimensions	14-16/07/99	9	34.6%	17	65.4%	26	100%
TOTAL EXPERTS		27	18.5%	119	81.5%	146	100%

Table 5: Distribution of women per country and geographical region

Geographical region	Men	Women	Total	AFRICA	Men	Women	Total	ASIA	Men	Women	Total	LATIN AMERICA
	1		1	Algeria	4		4	Bangladesh	3	1	4	Argentina
	1		1	Angola	1		1	Bhutan	1		1	Barbados
	1		1	Benin	2	2	4	China	3	2	5	Bolivia
	0	2	2	Burkina Faso	3		3	India	3		3	Brazil
	4		4	Cameroon	3		3	Indonesia	5		5	Chile
	0	1	1	Chad	0		0	Iraq	1	1	2	Colombia
	1		1	Comores	1		1	Iran	1		1	Costa Rica
	1		1	Congo	1		1	Malaysia	4	1	5	Cuba
	1		1	Côte d'Ivoire	3		3	Nepal	0	0	0	Dominican Republic
	2		2	Egypt	3		3	Pakistan	1		1	El Salvador
	5	1	6	Ethiopia	3	1	4	Philippines	3		3	Guatemala
	2		2	Gambia	2		2	Singapore	0	2	2	Honduras
	3		3	Guinea	1		1	Sri Lanka	1		1	Jamaica
	1		1	Kenya	2	2	4	Thailand	1	1	2	Nicaragua
	0	2	2	Lesotho	1		1	Turkmenistan	2		2	Paraguay
	1		1	Madagascar	4	1	5	Viet Nam	0	1	1	Panama
	3		3	Mali					2	2	4	Peru
	3		3	Mauritania					1		1	St. Lucia
	2		2	Mauritius					1		1	Trinidad & Tobago
	1	1	2	Morocco					1		1	Uruguay
	1		1	Mozambique					0	1	1	Venezuela
	1		1	Niger								
	1		1	Nigeria								
	1		1	Senegal								
	1		1	South Africa								
	2		2	Sudan								
	2	1	3	Tanzania								
	2	1	3	Tunisia								
	3		3	Uganda								
	4		4	Zimbabwe								
Total experts:	51	9	60		34	6	40		34	12	46	
Total countries:	30				16				21			

Grand Total Men:	**119**
Grand Total Women:	**27**
Grand Total Experts:	**146**
Grand Total Countries:	**67**

Table 6a: Participation of experts from capitals in UNCTAD expert meetings in 1999

Meeting	Dates	Experts from capitals			Total N° experts	% Experts from DCs	Developing countries*	Total countries**	% DCs
		Total from DCs	of which LDCs	of which financed					
Expert Meeting on International Investment Agreements	24-26/03/99	34	2	17	62	55%	26	46	57%
Expert Meeting on Trade in the Agricultural Sector	26-28/04/99	71	4	17	91	78%	44	56	79%
Expert Meeting on Sustainable Financial and Non-financial Services for SME Development	02-04/06/99	50	16	25	69	72%	37	49	76%
Expert Meeting on Air Transport Services	21-23/06/99	39	14	17	49	80%	30	38	79%
Expert Meeting on Portfolio Investment Flows and Foreign Direct Investment	28-30/06/99	35	8	15	58	60%	32	48	67%
Expert Meeting on the Impact of Changing Supply-and-Demand Market Structures on Commodity Prices and Exports of Major Interest to Developing Countries	07-09/07/99	49	17	29	59	83%	39	47	83%
Expert meeting on Capacity-building in the Area of Electronic Commerce: Legal and Regulatory Dimensions	14-16/07/99	73	15	26	91	80%	47	60	78%
TOTAL		351	76	146	479	73%	255	344	74%
Percentage of LDCs or financed experts/total developing country experts			22%	42%					

* Total number of developing countries from which experts attended.

** Total number of all countries from which experts attended.

Table 6b: Participation of experts from capitals in UNCTAD expert meetings in 1998

Meeting	Dates	Experts from capitals			Total N° experts	% Experts from DCs	Developing countries*	Total countries**	% DCs
		Total from DCs	of which LDCs	of which financed					
Expert Meeting on Existing Regional and Multilateral Investment Agreements	01-03/04/98	32	9	0	58	55%	25	42	60%
Expert meeting on Inter-Firm Cooperation	20-22/04/98	6	0	0	22	27%	6	11	55%
Expert Meeting to Examine the Effectiveness and Usefulness for Commodity-dependent Countries of New Tools in Commodity Markets: Risk Management	04-06/05/98	25	3	0	31	81%	14	20	70%
Expert Meeting on the Growth of Domestic Capital	27-29/05/98	38	13	0	52	73%	18	28	64%
Expert Meeting on Strengthening the Capacity for Expanding the Tourism Sector in Developing Countries	08-10/06/98	50	9	0	65	77%	33	43	77%
Expert meeting on Capacity-building in the Area of Electronic Commerce	29/06-1/07/98	19	0	0	22	86%	11	14	79%
Expert Meeting on Strengthening Capacities in DCs to Develop their Environmental Services Sector	20-22/07/98	13	4	0	22	59%	10	15	67%
Expert Meeting on Clustering and Networking for SME Development	02-04/09/98	18	3	0	36	50%	11	24	46%
TOTAL		201	41	0	308	65%	128	197	65%
Percentage of LDCs or financed experts/total developing country experts			20%	0%					

* Total number of developing countries from which experts attended.

** Total number of all countries from which experts attended.